



# ECEAP

WASHINGTON STATE'S



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
AND  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Preschool for low-income and at-risk children in Washington State

## The Science of Children's Brain Development

**A child's developing brain forms connections that shape a lifetime of abilities and potential.** Physical, intellectual, and emotional development is impacted by early experiences, both positive and negative. Chances for future success can be boosted by providing appropriate experiences in a safe, caring, and nurturing environment such as ECEAP. Here are some important findings from recent brain research that demonstrate exactly how critical quality early care and learning experiences are for young children's healthy development:

- ◆ Intellectual and social development is optimal during the early years from birth to eight years of age.
- ◆ Quality care and security of attachment affects a child's later capacity for empathy, emotional regulation, and behavioral control.
- ◆ Consistent, nurturing relationships are critical to the early years of development and learning.
- ◆ A child's developing brain is dependent on an enriched environment.
- ◆ Rich and positive experiences stabilize certain connections in the brain.
- ◆ Certain skills are learned most easily during particular "windows of opportunity" when a part of the brain absorbs new information more easily and grows new connections faster than at any other time in life, such as:
  - √ Gross motor skills - birth to 5 years; fine motor skills - birth to 10 years
  - √ Vision development - birth to 2 years
  - √ First language - birth to 2 years; second language - birth to 10 years
  - √ Music and math skills - birth to 10 years
  - √ Emotional attachment - birth to 18 months
  - √ Emotional control & emotional intelligence - 8 months to late adolescence

**ECEAP: Ready to Succeed!**